

# Saturday Magazine.

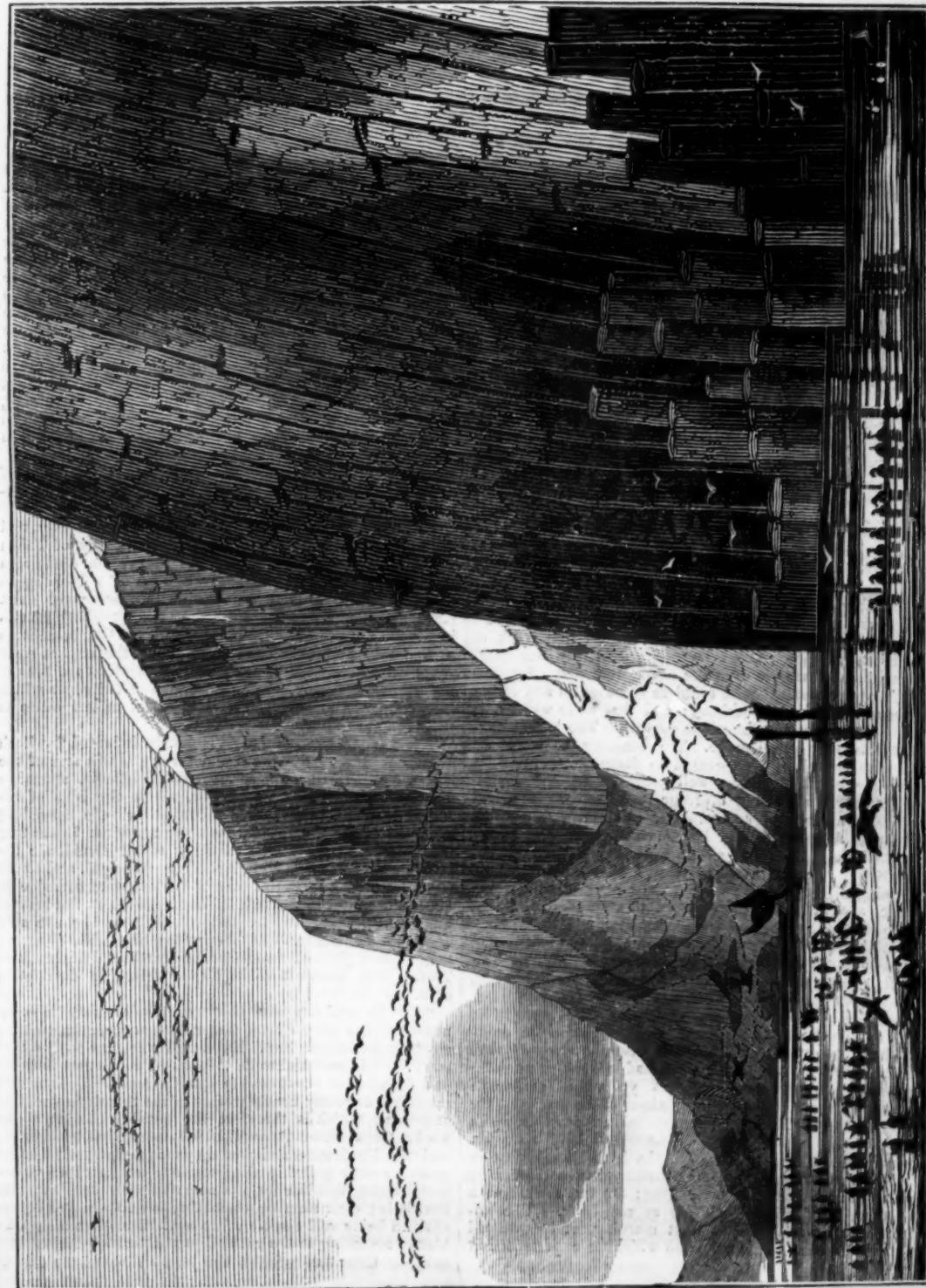
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THE SHIANT ISLES.

## SKETCHES OF THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS OF SCOTLAND

## PART THE FIFTH.

## SHIANT ISLES; LEWIS; LOCHS.

(A. D. 1827. SEPT.)

THE southern and western sides of the Shiант Islands exhibit little of the basaltic formation. The perfect stillness of the water afforded us a good opportunity of witnessing the mode in which the Soland goose, the albatross of the northern seas, drops for fish. Towering to a great height, the bird folds its wings, and descends, head foremost, with prodigious velocity into the water, which resounds as if a large stone had fallen into it, and recovers its smoothness before the bird re-appears, usually bringing a fish in its beak. The Soland goose destroys a great quantity of herrings. The head, neck, and shoulders of this bird are exceedingly tough and strong; so much so as to resist all small shot, but slugs or swan. The cormorant is equally thick-skinned, and extremely full of blood, of which the natives of the Hebrides are said to make a soup, somewhat resembling hare-soup, the standard dish of the eastern coast of Scotland, little known on the western, on account of the rarity of hares. It is remarkable that hares were unknown on the western coast of Scotland, till their migration to it was facilitated by the military roads. The cormorant is said to have been anciently used in Scotland as a whet to the appetite before dinner. The young of the kittywake gull was eaten for the same purpose.

We met, on returning to the coast, a large wherry proceeding to the islands, to convey the shepherd and his family away after the harvest. No one can be prevailed on to reside there. A former shepherd lost his wife, a son, and daughter, at different times, by their falling over precipices.

Touching at Loch Brolum, we coasted Lewis, to Loch Shiell, and proceeded to the inn, a neat slated house. To our dismay, as we had consumed our original stock of provisions, we found, save a bowl of excessively sour milk, the negative catalogue complete. We were assured, moreover, that not even oat-cake could be procured in any of the cottages in the neighbourhood: and that as to whisky, it was not to be found in the whole country. The latter statement was very questionable. The boatmen, to whom we had promised whisky, expressed no disappointment at not meeting with it, doubtless well prepared for the denial, and returned without a murmur to Valamis. We had before us a walk of several hours; and it was already evening. A guide offered his services, professing knowledge of the track: but as we advanced he became bewildered by the multitude of lakes and the multifarious gleaming of the water, which at first served to direct his course, and at length was brought to stand-still, by an arm of the sea, along the rugged shore of which he led us scrambling on, till we stumbled upon a cottage half buried in the ground, when he discovered where he was. The inmate, being summoned, instantly sprung from his bed, satisfied our craving appetite with a bowl of delicious milk, launched a boat, and conveyed us across Loch Eisort amidst a blaze of phosphoric light. A single light on the opposite shore served as our beacon, and comforted us with the assurance, that though the time had advanced an hour beyond midnight, some one was yet watching in the manse of our old friend, the Minister of Lochs. On our arrival, we found his daughter prepared to receive us, and a table laden with viands, the ample remnants of a supper, of which some Irish gentlemen, who had been fishing in the neighbourhood, had already partaken, and which were reserved in the event of our coming; for the arrival of a guest, in Scotland, is welcome at any hour. The minister met us at breakfast next morning, and expressed great indignation at the reception which we experienced at Loch Shiell.

## LOCH TUA; GRACE, CAVES; LOCH BERNERA; CALERNISH; STONE CIRCLES.

To the north of Stornaway are some natural phenomena well worth visiting. We proceeded to these along the shore of Loch Tua or Broad Bay, on the north side of the Aird, a safe roadstead for shipping, to the farm-house of Grace, which has been occupied by the present tenant and his ancestors for 200 years. A neighbouring creek presents an extraordinary natural wall of rock of little breadth, seemingly of artificial construction, emerging from a bed of plum-pudding stone, the material of which the coast is chiefly composed, and disappearing in the sea. The existence of a corresponding stratification on the opposite coast of Scotland, of which I was assured, would indicate its extension to a distance of at least forty miles. The other wonders of this part of the coast are two caves, the larger of which, being accessible only at the spring ebb, we could not enter. The smaller is deep, lofty, and spacious: we appeared to each other but pygmies, standing at opposite extremities of it. Its sides are incrusted with stalactical frost-work of variegated colours, in some places assuming, as in the cave of Strath Aird, the columnar form. The other is said to be superior to this, not only in size, but in the splendour of its sparry decorations. These caves still afford a retreat to seals and sea-otters; but the number of these animals has been greatly diminished by the unrelenting warfare waged against them.

To the northward of Grace the coast becomes bolder, and terminates in the long and narrow promontory of Tolsta Head. Near this point are an old tower, the scene of a traditional tale; and a cairn, the tomb of a Norwegian princess. The hills in this neighbourhood yield deer. Lewis, Sky, and Jura, are the only three Scottish islands in which these animals are still found. Dr. Clarke informs us that they were extirpated in Rum by the eagles, some years before his visit. They existed in Mull at the time of the statistical survey. The destruction of the copse which supplied cover to the fawns, is assigned as one cause of their disappearance.

The western coast of Lewis is deeply indented by Loch Bernera. The rocky shores and surface of this arm of the sea, sprinkled with numerous groups of islands, appear in long and picturesque perspective, whilst the hills of the southern district of Lewis finely bound the spreading branches of the bay. Near its shore are some interesting monuments, of the kind commonly called Druidical: the remains of three stone circles. The principal, and by far the most perfect of them, one of the most remarkable in form and extent in the British Isles, stands on the brow of a promontory overhanging the bay, striking the eye at a considerable distance, like a cemetery of thickly-clustered tomb-stones. It has been visited by Martin and Macculloch. To the latter we are indebted for the following description of it.

"The general aspect of this structure is that of a cross, nearly of the proportions of the Roman crucifix, with a circle at the intersection. But a nearer inspection discovers more than is essential to that form. The largest line lies in a direction of about twenty-four degrees west of the true meridian, or pretty nearly in that of the magnetic variation at present, which is therefore the general bearing of the work. Great stones intermixed with some that have fallen, and with blank spaces whence they may have been removed, or where more probably they are covered by the soil, are found along this line for the space of 588 feet, including the circle; their number amounting to fourteen, and eleven of them being still erect. If we were allowed to fill up the blanks according to the general proportions of the intervals between those that remain, the number would be twenty

within that distance. But following the direction of this line further on, there are indications of other stones, all of them fallen, and nearly covered by earth and vegetation, that would justify us in extending it ninety feet, or more, further, thus making the total length about 680 feet. Parallel to the long leg of the cross, and to that only, is another line, now far less perfect than the first, since it contains only three erect and seven fallen stones, and reaches, as far as I could discover, only to 480 feet. Thus these two lines may be conceived to form a sort of avenue to the circular enclosure; its breadth being exactly equal to a semi-diameter of the circle, as the additional line touches the edge of this. The shorter line of the cross, at right angles to the other, now measures 204 feet, including the circle: but as it is longer on one side than the other, its original length has probably been greater, though I was unable to detect any traces of fallen stones; the progress of some enclosures having here interfered with the integrity of the work. This line contains ten erect stones. The diameter of the circle is sixty-three feet from north to south, and sixty-two from east to west, and it contains fourteen erect stones in the circumference, with one in the centre. This central stone is twelve feet high; one near the end of the long line measures thirteen, a few are found reaching to seven or eight, but the height of the greater number does not exceed four.

The intervals between the stones vary from two to ten yards, but the larger ones are probably the consequence of the loss of those which once occupied these places. I ought to add that the total number of stones which I could discover, either erect or recently fallen, is forty-eight; and that if the whole rank were complete, as it appears originally to have been built, they would amount to sixty-five or sixty-six." My measurements did not entirely coincide with those here stated: but on the whole they are doubtless accurate. The recent removal of the peat-moss, in which the stones are half buried, from the sides of one of them, exhibits not only the surprising growth of this vegetable production, on a height where it could not receive any alluvial contributions, or deposit of extraneous decayed vegetable matter, but also the method employed by the rude architects who erected them, to fix them on those bases on which they have remained unmoved for centuries. The stone is inserted in a hole, filled up with small loose fragments of the same material. The elevation of the stones of the central circle must have amounted to thirty feet above the ground. Where exposed to view, the substance is as white as a bleached bone, contrasting singularly with the "gray" hue produced by the atmosphere.

The fanciful conjecture of Toland respecting this structure, which I have read detailed in an *Encyclopædia*, is ridiculed by Dr. Macculloch. The circular or oval form of these edifices was selected, no doubt, as best adapted to the purpose for which they were erected, and not with reference to the signs of the zodiac, as the number of stones in the circle varies indefinitely. The extensive appendage to the circle at Calernish, which distinguishes it from other circles, consists of the four avenues of stones directed towards it, from the four principal points of the compass, and is also so simply constructed that its origin may be accounted for without imputing to the architect an astronomical design exhibited in no other structure of the same kind. The other two circles in the neighbourhood are composed of much smaller stones; one is incomplete, the other has a double row still standing, and arranged in an oval form. The people have no tradition respecting them.

Doubtless, while the world lasts, Stonehenge and all similar remains of antiquity will be commonly attributed to the Druids. Yet they are found in countries, such as the Scandinavian, and in Scotland, where it does not appear that the Druids were known. Of the Druids, we have no information except from the Roman writers, who state that their chief seats were in Gaul and Great Britain, and that they worshipped exclusively in groves. The monuments of antiquity miscalled Druidical, were clearly constructed for all public purposes, whether legislative, judicial, festal, or sepulchral; and consequently vary much in form and dimensions. A copious account of those existing in Sweden, illustrated by numerous engravings, has been published at Stockholm, by M. Siöborg, the principal antiquary of that country, but unfortunately in his native language, which is little known beyond his own country. One of those described by him is remarkable, as the stones of which it is

composed, are arranged in the shape of a vessel, some of them representing the position of the masts;—indicating the burial-place of a celebrated pirate.

That the remains in Scotland were of Scandinavian origin, there can be little doubt, the probability being heightened by the circumstance of their being found chiefly on the coasts and islands which were most frequented by the Danes and Norwegians. Pennant took for granted that they were Druidical, and under the influence of this prepossession, found in the immediate vicinity of one which he examined on the mainland, the residence of the Arch-Druid. "The Druids undoubtedly possessed Iona, before the introduction of Christianity. A green eminence close to the Sound of Iona, is to this day called the Druids' burial-place\*." A cottager, some years ago, planting potatoes in this spot, and digging earth to cover them, brought up some bones which the people of the island immediately concluded to be the bones of the Druids: the tradition is, that the first Christians banished the Druids, and took possession of their seat. The Druids also had a temple on the head of Loch Swidain in a farm called Rossal. The temple is but small, and several of the stones have fallen down. Here, as the name of the place indicates, they held courts of justice."—*Statistical Survey*.

Borlase and others attribute the famous rocking-stone in Cornwall to the mechanical skill of the same sages; and discover in the granite blocks, of which a hill near Penzance consists, their instruments of worship and magic. As well might the construction of the Land's End, which is composed of similar materials, and put together in a similar fashion, be ascribed to them. The Druids may possibly have erected some of the remains in Britain, and in France: the existence of such monuments in the latter country, though most of them have been probably destroyed, being proved by the large one still standing near Quiberon Bay, and another near Orléans. The most perfect extant was perhaps that discovered in Jersey, which is now preserved at Park Place, near Henley-upon-Thames, having been presented by the inhabitants of that island to Marshal Cornway, the governor.

The improbability of the Druids having built in countries where they cannot be supposed to have existed, needs not the refutation implied in an improbability of an opposite import, that they should not adopt the rude style of architecture common in the age in which they lived. It is possible that Stonehenge may have been raised by the Druids, whilst the similar remains in Scotland must be referred to architects of later date, and less dubious celebrity. Dr. Macculloch opposes the exclusive claims of the Druids with his usual ability.

\* *Claodh nan Druineach* signifies the Druids' burial-place.



ST. OLA'S GOOSE.

## LEWIS, STORNAWAY; FUNERALS.

DURING my stay at Stornaway, I received an invitation to attend the funeral of a wealthy old lady, who had made numerous and liberal bequests. She was sister of Colonel Colin Mackenzie, who long held with considerable reputation the office of Surveyor General of India\*. Immediately after the decease of this lady, a cask of Madeira was opened in her house, a wake had been kept up, and the house nightly illuminated according to the custom of the country. The chief-mourner, who arrived in an open boat from the main-land, was a minister, and the funeral was attended by all the principal inhabitants of Stornaway. Our party from the lodge arrived too late at the house of the deceased to partake of the preliminary refreshments, but we overtook the procession on the road to the ancient cemetery of Stornaway, which is situated on the beach of Broad Bay, about four miles from the town. Another burial-place used by the people of Stornaway, near the town, has been so encroached upon by the ravages of the sea, that the bodies will probably soon be consigned to a watery grave.

An old chapel, the larger half of which is unroofed, stands in the cemetery. Beneath a flagstone on the pavement, undistinguished by any inscription, lies the body of the last Earl of Seaforth, who forfeited his title in consequence of his participation in the rebellion of 1715, and lived and died afterwards in a species of exile in Stornaway. The loyalty of succeeding generations has purged the attainder which attached to the rebellious ancestors of many of the noble families of Scotland, and the restoration of the forfeited titles must be regarded with unmixed satisfaction. But great difficulties must embarrass the exertion of the royal prerogative, arising from the separation of the hereditary estates from the line upon which the title would now devolve, the difficulty of preserving the descent, the existence of collateral heirs alone, and other perplexing circumstances†. There are other monuments of the Mackenzies of Seaforth, some of which bear the family crest, the stag's horns, assumed by an ancestor who saved the life of Malcolm king of Scotland, whilst hunting, from the attack of a stag, an achievement which forms the subject of one of West's finest paintings. The unroofed part of the chapel contains the tombs of nineteen of the Macleods, the ancient proprietors of the island: a warrior in armour is represented upon one of them in basso-relievo. The graves of the principal families are enclosed by four walls forming a sort of mausoleum. That of the lady whose obsequies we were celebrating, contains a marble monument to the memory of Colonel Colin Mackenzie, bearing a highly panegyrical inscription. Stornaway, in which town he filled the office of Inspector of the Customs, is proud of his fame. The Duke of Wellington is reported at Stornaway to have said at Badajoz, when some difficulties obstructed the progress of the siege, "Oh, that old Mackenzie were here!"

In Scotland, the funeral ceremony is celebrated without any religious rite. The minister of the parish attends only when invited, and not officially. He sometimes embraces the solemn opportunity of offering up a prayer among the assembled mourners at the house of the deceased, previous to the departure of the procession, though he may not accompany it. On the present occasion, as soon as we reached the cemetery, the coffin was deposited in the grave with all possible decency, and the whole body of mourners instantly adjourned to a tent pitched in the cemetery, within a few yards of the mausoleum, where we found tables groaning beneath a plentiful repast. As soon as we were all arranged, 120 in number, the minister, who presided as chief-mourner, delivered a grace in the form of a prayer; and the minister of the parish offered up another, accompanied by thanksgiving after dinner. The bottle was then circulated, and many loyal, patriotic, and complimentary toasts, including the *Church of England*, and the *Kirk of Scotland*, followed: nor was the memory of the deceased forgotten, whilst the toasts

\* See account of this distinguished native of Lewis, *Saturday Mag.* Vol. IV., p. 241, and *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, No. 11.

† The estates forfeited after the Rebellion of 1745 were vested in the Crown, and afterwards unalienably annexed, and the rents and profits appropriated to the improvement of the Highlands and prevention of disorders. In 1784 they were restored, on condition of the grantees paying back the amount of the debt upon them discharged by government; and the fund thus placed at the disposal of government was dedicated to economical moral and religious purposes in Scotland.—See *Report of Commissioners on Forfeited Estates*.

were as usual, accompanied with appropriate speeches. The presence of several ministers, and one acting as chairman, no doubt tended to preserve a certain degree of sobriety in the midst of revelry and merriment, inseparable from such a meeting, as the occasion would be necessarily speedily forgotten by the greater part present. But at length the chord was touched, to which the bosoms of the Islanders responded, amidst the flow of wine and whisky, with restless accord. "The chief of the Macivers" was proposed amidst loud applause. The guests became now quite tumultuous, and the Rev. Chairman immediately rose up and left the tent, accompanied by nearly all the party. The expectation of the gleanings of so plenteous a repast had attracted to the spot a multitude of people of all ages, who thronged around and closed in upon the tent, eager for the signal for rushing in upon the remains of the feast. A man was constantly employed in walking round the tent, armed with a long whip, with which he inflicted perpetual, but almost fruitless, chastisement on intruders.

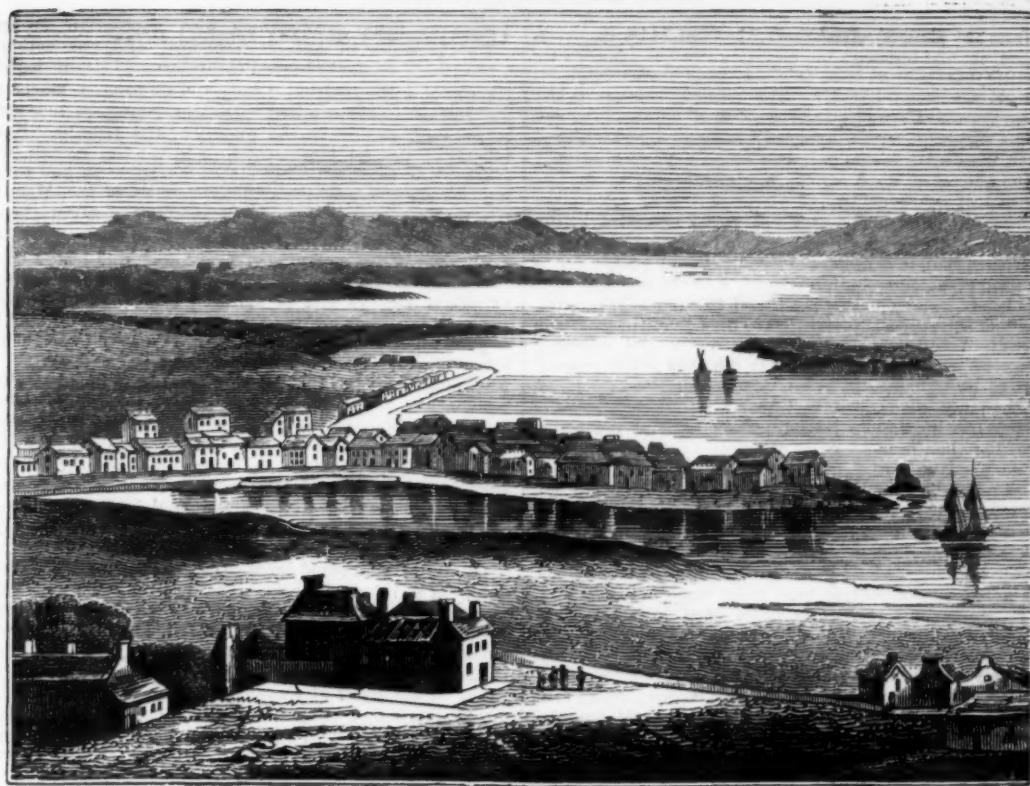
A few of the guests, who had not heeded the example of the chairman, continued long carousing, and one of them was brought to Stornaway on the bier which conveyed the body to the grave. A Highland laird, to whom I afterwards mentioned the circumstance, observed that he was "a very lucky fellow to get so good a berth." The festivities were, however, attended with much less excess and confusion than occur frequently on such occasions. Such disorderly proceedings are happily growing into disuse, and the beneficial example afforded more recently at the funerals of the celebrated Glengarry and the late Duke of Gordon, has tended to accelerate the reform.

While on this topic, I may mention the following circumstances which occurred at the cemetery of Assynt, which were narrated to me by a gentleman present. The habitation of the deceased was distant from the place of interment. The body was borne on men's shoulders during part of the journey, and then conveyed in a boat over the lake. The bearers became so drunk by frequent recourse to the whisky, that at length there was scarcely found a sufficient number of persons sober enough to deposit the coffin in the boat, many of the attendants being drunk when they left the house of the deceased. When they reached the shore, the body was forgotten, and a detachment was sent in quest of it, after a numerous muster had been made in the churchyard, and the cause of the delay which prevented the last act of the ceremony was ascertained. But the collection of a multitude of fiery spirits, heated by intoxicating liquors, was attended by its probable consequences. The sexton happened to cast up, whilst digging the grave, a large thigh-bone, which proved in very deed a bone of contention. On the northern shore of Loch Assynt, contiguous to each other, stood an old castle and a mansion-house, in which resided formerly two families, Mackenzies and Macdonalds, between whom a violent feud subsisted. The bone was of such large size that the Mackenzies claimed it as having belonged to one of their race, a man of gigantic stature. This point was, however, disputed by the other party, and a desperate fight ensued. My informant, who was a boy, took refuge inside the church to avoid the fray of the combatants, and surveyed the battle from the window. But he had reason to rue the choice which he had made of his asylum, for some wag locked the door and carried off the key, and he spent the night in his prison.

At the more recent funeral of a distinguished officer, a large body of Highlanders assembled. A man of the country, pointing out to me the place of interment, spoke of the circumstance with characteristic animation: "Oh sir, it was a grand entertainment, there were five thousand Highlanders present: we were very jolly: some did not quit the spot till next morning, some not till the day following; they lay drinking on the ground it was like a field of battle!"

At a late interment in Ross-shire, the mourners engaged in a general row, and the loss of lives was the result, a consequence by no means uncommon. Dr. Macculloch mentions that it was matter of boasting, that at one funeral a pipe and a half of whisky had been drunk.

So inseparably blended in the mind of the Highlanders are the funeral and festal preparations, that a worthy minister of a small island directed that the eakes and other ingredients of the banquet, sent to him from Campbeltown in Argyleshire, should be packed in the coffin destined for his wife. A gentleman who purchased an estate in Inverness-shire, being present at a funeral soon



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after taking possession of it, commended some excellent wheaten bread which was served at the entertainment, and asked his host, the son of the lady whose obsequies they were celebrating, whence it came. "It was brought with the hearse, with my mother's body from Inverness!" was the reply. Years elapsed, my informant assured me, before he lost the taste of that wheaten bread.

The festal celebration does not terminate with the funeral, but is sometimes prolonged during weeks. At Campbelltown I found a widow-lady, who had buried her husband some weeks before, still keeping open house, providing every evening refreshment for visitors, and expecting that all her neighbours, not only those of the town but of the country, should in turn pay the customary respects. The expenses incurred on these occasions, are often, as it may be supposed, very onerous, and among the poor often involve families in the severest distress, for they will submit to any sacrifice to secure a decent interment for a relative.

Whence arises, it may be asked, revelry so utterly at variance with the feelings of awe or sorrow naturally excited by death and its solemn accompaniments? It cannot be attributed to the levity of the people, because none are accustomed to regard death with more habitual seriousness than the natives of these regions. The thought or mention of his inevitable doom is not discarded by the Scottish Highlander with affected contempt or inconsiderate levity, but entertained with becoming solemnity: and particular customs confirm this natural disposition, one of which is that of the bride considering it to be one of her first duties after marriage, to prepare her winding-sheet for her interment. Nor does it proceed from deficiency of relative attachment, because the Highlanders are strongly actuated by this principle; and the very anxiety to provide an entertainment suitable to the rank or family of the deceased results from its operation. Nay, it is often indulged at the expense of personal feeling, as well as considerable cost, for the relative merges his own grief in the desire of bestowing appropriate honour on the deceased; and so far was this devotion formerly carried, that the nearest of kin opened the funeral ball on the night after the death. A laird, to whom I was speaking of the noted attachment borne to a neighbouring landlord by his tenants, observed, "True, but they will, nevertheless, all get drunk at his funeral."

Are we then to seek a cause for such inconsistency of

conduct in the single circumstance of providing a banquet on funeral occasions, in conformity to very ancient practice?

"For the comfort of them whose minds are through natural affection pensive in such cases, no man," observes Hooker, "can justly mislike the custom which the Jews had to end their burials with funeral banquets, in reference whereunto the prophet Jeremy spake concerning the people, whom God had appointed unto a grievous manner of destruction, saying, 'that men should not give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or their mother'; because it shall not be now with them as in peaceable times with others, who bringing their ancestors unto the grave with weeping eyes, have, notwithstanding, means wherewith to be re-comforted. 'Give wine,' saith Solomon, 'unto those that have grief of heart.' — *Ecclesiastical Polity*, v. 75.

The ancient Scandinavians celebrated the entrance into life with mourning, and the departure out of it with rejoicing‡. In Scotland the dance has been discontinued, and the bagpipe is no longer used at funerals. General Stewart says, that the last time a piper officiated on such an occasion in Perthshire, was in 1736, at the funeral of Rob Roy. But the custom was recently revived at that of the late Roman Catholic Bishop of the western district in the island of Lismore, in compliance with his dying request, in strict conformity with his character, which was that of a genuine Highlander.

The illumination of the house immediately after the decease and the late wake, may be doubtless partly attributed to the superstitious notion of chasing evil spirits from the corpse.

The funereal banquet in Scotland is now strictly limited to the provision of entertainment for the assembled mourners, whether terminating on the occasion itself, or prolonged for a considerable period, so as to enable all persons so disposed to pay their tribute of respect to the memory of the deceased. The practice unbused is unobjectionable, nay necessary. The mourners are often brought from remote parts, performing laborious journeys, or encountering winds and waves, to reach the place of interment, a spot frequently selected on account of its central situation, or the ancient veneration attached to it, and very

\* Jeremiah xvi. 7.

† Proverbs xxxi. 6.

‡ "Pueraria luctu, funeraque festivo cantu concelebrantes." — Olaus.

far from any place of refreshment; they cannot be dismissed without it; and although the cemetery itself is unsuited for a repast, yet its immediate neighbourhood is often unavoidably chosen for the purpose. The censure belongs to the extravagance, wasteful, and sometimes ruinous: to the excess which converts the funeral banquet into a scene of mirth, disorder, and violence, and renders the serious mind of the natives of these regions less susceptible of the impression of death on the very occasion of its celebration than on any other. The excess is partly produced by the inebriating quality of the beverage resorted to on these occasions; but is doubtless to be attributed principally to the want of an adequate preventive, a burial-service, such as is used by some of the Reformed Churches on the continent, or more especially like that of the Church of England, repelling mirth and levity by the awful and affecting solemnity with which it "commits the body to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," whilst it represses immoderate grief, by lifting the dejected spirit of the mourner to "the sure and certain hope of the resurrection of the life to come."

The abuse of burial-grounds, already adverted to, may be traced partly to the same source. As they are not consecrated, they are usually selected from the convenience of the situation, and often for the exclusive use of a particular family, independently of those which ancient respect has hallowed, and are consequently very numerous, and liable occasionally to very great neglect. The want of proper feeling respecting them even in towns, may be inferred from the state of the churchyard around the cathedral of Dornoch, described in the *Statistical Survey*, as being "without any fence, and in the centre of the burgh. It is the market-place. The country round runs through it." Yet to this cemetery the people are particularly attached. "Some years ago," proceeds the same account, "the heritors of the parish and magistrates of the burgh, entered into a resolution to prohibit all further burying there. A piece of ground without the town was accordingly marked out for that use. A day was fixed, beyond which no person was to be admitted to the old ground, and public intimations to that purpose repeatedly made. But the prejudices of the people prevailed, and the project was relinquished."

The neglect of cemeteries dates probably from the period at which their consecration and the use of funeral rites were discontinued, for the ancient practice of the people was very different, as is proved by the sculptured monuments which still adorn the old cemeteries, the custom of placing a stone on the cairn, and other memorials. There is a Gaelic phrase signifying, "If I be alive after your death, I will carefully lay a stone on your cairn."—*Statistical Survey*. The cairns or heaps of stones in the form of a cone, and other sepulchral remains, are traditionally reported to have been piled up for the purpose of protecting the bodies which they covered from the voracity of wolves, which abounded once in Scotland. These animals, unfortunately for the repose of the dead, disappeared about two centuries ago, the last having been killed, as we are informed in the *Tales of my Grandfather*, by Cameron of Lochiel, during the Civil Wars.

Dr. Macculloch makes some judicious observations on the subject: and he contrasts the respect manifested by the Welsh for their funeral repositories with the neglect of their kindred Celts of the North. The comparison with another division of the same race, the Irish, might have proved less disadvantageous to the Highlanders; for the very veneration for ancient burial-grounds has produced amongst this people treatment scarcely less reprehensible. They continue to use them, after they have been choked up with bodies, and thus convert cemeteries, and even the ruined churches which they usually surround, into charnel-houses, exhibiting the most ghastly spectacle of broken coffins, piles of sculls and bones disinterred, to provide room for fresh bodies.

The cemetery of Muckross Abbey may recur to the remembrance of those who have visited Killarney. Well may the place be regarded with such awe that no native of that country will visit it after sunset, unless fortified, as in the instance of one person whom I met with on the lake, by the conviction, that his ancestors, having been buried in it for many generations, would turn out in his defence, should other ghosts attempt to injure him.

#### LEWIS; CRIME; MORALS; SPIRITS; ILLICIT DISTILLATION; DISTILLERIES.

CRIME is unfrequent in Lewis. The lock-up house in Stornaway is little required. In regard to morals, it may be asserted, respecting the natives of the Highlands and Islands in general, that notwithstanding occasional excess, sobriety and chastity prevail amongst them. Restraints to the free use of spirits are supplied by poverty by regard to the maintenance of parents or children, and the assistance of relations and neighbours, which in these regions is unchecked by the operation of poor-laws\*, and by the little facility or temptation afforded to assemblages for drinking, by shops for the sale of spirits. Where the operation of these restraints ceases, the practice is indulged chiefly at public meetings, fairs, and funerals; and the rare occurrence of the latter may partly account for the extent to which it proceeds. Yet, even in these, the habitual characteristic sobriety of the Highlander's deportment often belies the copiousness of his potations, and he will preserve the most perfect decorum under the influence of a quantity of spirits which would render an Irishman frantic. "The Irish," said Sir Jonah Barrington, "are drunk before dinner, and mad after it." "Always drinking, and never drunk," is, on the contrary, the maxim of the most intemperate Highlanders.

Instances of habitual intoxication among the yeomanry, and even of those whose example is of far more extensive consequence, it cannot be denied, may be occasionally met with. A change of wind had nearly, at one time, introduced me to the hospitality of a gentleman, residing in an island, who, at the age of 60, had persevered, for several years, in the habit of quaffing two bottles of whisky per day! The better classes became habituated to this fiery and poisonous drug by the unfortunate custom, still very prevalent in the North, of taking a glass of it as a dram before breakfast. I found it the invariable practice at all the houses, whether of clergymen or sheep-farmers, in the western parts of Sutherlandshire, in which I breakfasted; and frequently witnessed the most simple and undisembodied astonishment at my not complying with it. Nay, in the northern counties, it is no uncommon thing to see ladies toss off a glass of whisky at the early time in question, but under the less-startling designation of *bitters*, which it assumes when administered to female lips.

Whisky follows the Highlander from the cradle to the grave, and often accelerates his progress from the one to the other, before he can exercise the discretionary power of refusing it. It is administered to the child immediately after its birth, and invariably, and often fatally, in the measles, the people imagining that it keeps the disorder "out of the heat." The measles were raging in Stornaway and in Orkney during my tour; in the former it was calculated that about 40 children had fallen victims to this ardent medicine. In Orkney, the clergy were seconding, but in vain, the endeavours of the medical men to counteract this baneful custom. It prevails very generally in England.

The traveller, after several hours of exposure to heavy rain, and perhaps a rough sea, has no reason to quarrel with a glass of *whisky toddy*, but he has often to be annoyed by the exhortations and provocations to the repetition of the dose which occasionally assail him; his host forgetting that *compulsory feeding*, whether in the article of meat or drink, is a decided breach of hospitality, as well as of good breeding. He seems too often to consider the national, as well as individual honour, implicated in his guest's surrender of his reason, and sacrifice of personal comfort, and the persevering, "You'll be the better of a little," is resorted to where a summary appeal to the usage of the land is ineffectual. Many a young English man has had ample occasion to rue his visits to the Highlands of Scotland, as having betrayed him to the use of spirits, which he perhaps scarcely ever tasted in his own country, but to which he has been led by the example and encouragement of his hosts, and by the supposed necessity of conforming to the *presumed custom* of the country. The habit formed in the invigorating and inspiring atmosphere of the mountains, itself the *elixir vitae*, has been perpetuated to the injury of his health and the abridgment of his life. Few who have passed much time in the Highlands will hesitate to acknowledge that this statement is

\* Notice will hereafter be taken of the *assessments*, corresponding to the English rate, which are gradually spreading northward from the Lowlands.

not overcharged. But in no respect, perhaps, has the present age surpassed that which preceded it in the progress of improvement, more than in its emancipation from the barbarous and brutal custom of *compulsory drinking*.

The importation of smuggled foreign spirits into Lewis is much counteracted by the vessels belonging to the Revenue Service, which cruise constantly along the coast, and are very active in procuring information. These vessels are dreaded by the traders, who are obliged to come to, and to submit to be searched, often losing their passage by the detention, or by being compelled to postpone their entrance into the harbour to another tide. Serious altercations perpetually occur between them. The evils of this system seem to justify the preference of that of the Preventive Service as introduced now along the southern English coast. The importation of foreign spirits into Lewis is almost entirely carried on by vessels of other nations, particularly the Norwegian, which procure them in France, and being permitted to land them under bond for exportation, contrive to sell them to the inhabitants. The foreign spirit chiefly imported is gin, but whisky is the favourite beverage; and, as there has been hitherto no legal distillery, it is principally the produce of illicit distillation.

The Excise is utterly inefficient. The officers now and then set out upon an excursion, and do by chance, sometimes, stumble upon a still, when they meet with no opposition; as the islanders imagine, that the ill treatment of an Excise-officer would probably lead to the quartering amongst them of a detachment of troops. So openly do the people admit the practice of illicit distillation in their festal hours, that they ask their guests, and my informer was an officer of the Navy, belonging to the Revenue Service, to whom the question had been often put, whether they prefer *Coll or Grace*; whisky of those farms having been celebrated. A more numerous and vigorous excise is indispensable, and a cheap legal supply of spirits a needful preliminary to coercive measures. For this purpose, Mr. Stewart Mackenzie has adopted the plan which has been successfully pursued by the Duke of Sutherland, by some of the proprietors in the Orkneys, by Mr. Campbell of Isla, and others, of erecting a distillery.

The morality and expediency of this method of extirpating the illicit distillation have been questioned. Its efficacy, notwithstanding the preference of the people to the illegal whisky, which being made in smaller worms is of finer quality, has been proved by experience. Those who push the principle adopted, and most beneficially, by the Temperance Societies to an extent further than the very regulations of those admirable institutions will warrant\*, may denounce any compromise with spirits as unjustifiable, and insist upon the total disuse of them.

Experience, the result whether of choice or of necessity, has invariably ratified the opinion of medical practitioners, respecting the mischievous effects of drinking ardent spirits, both physical and social, and has strengthened the conclusion that a total abstinence from them, except medicinally, occasionally in sickness or decrepitude, or even after severe labour or exposure, promotes the health, as well as the comfort and happiness of a people. We must be careful, however, not to argue against the use of God's good gifts from the abuse to which they are liable. Our very Temperance Societies provide a salvo for the moderate use of spirits upon this principle. A legal supply of this beverage is therefore not intrinsically immoral or irreligious; and experience has proved its tendency to supersede the illicit supply, whether by distillation or importation, and therefore to extirpate all those evils, indolence, crime, profligacy, and disregard of constitutional authorities, involved in the infraction of the laws. The confirmed habits of smuggling which the people of Lewis have acquired, inclined them to predict the failure of the distillery at Stornaway. Yet it has been so successful that another has been since erected on the opposite coast of the island. How far the legal supply of spirits, coupled with the reduction of duty on the spirits brought to charge, have tended to supersede smuggled spirits, may be inferred from the statement made by Lord Althorp, in the House of Commons last year.

\* As a specimen of some of the ultra manifestoes put forth under the implied sanction of the Society referred to, in defiance of its own avowed principle, it has been declared that the success of the Institution cannot be expected till spirits are prohibited, even as a medicine. "Defend me from my friends," is a petition which cannot be too frequently on the lips of the supporters of those magnificent philanthropic and religious institutions which form a distinguishing feature of this age and of this country.

	Duty in Scotland on s. d.	Average No. of Gals.
	Imperial gallon.	brought to charge under that rate.
Before 1825	6 2	3,158,200
In 1825	Ditto reduced to .2 4 <sup>1</sup>	Ditto ditto... 4,324,322
In 1826	Ditto —	Ditto ditto... 5,950,941
In 1827	Ditto raised to .2 10	Ditto ditto... 3,985,000
In 1828	Ditto —	Ditto ditto... 4,752,000
In 1829	Ditto —	Ditto ditto... 5,695,000
In 1830	Ditto —	Ditto ditto... 5,756,000
In 1831	Ditto raised to .3 4	Ditto ditto... 5,992,421
In 1832	Ditto —	Ditto ditto... 5,691,000
In 1833	Ditto —	Ditto ditto... 5,401,000
In 1834	Number of Gallons increasing †.	

The usual arguments which I have heard strenuously urged in Lewis, and other parts of Scotland, in behalf of illicit distillation, and more especially addressed to the landlords, is that it ensures to them the payment of their rent, and that without the means which it affords to the tenant, that payment would not be effected. This statement has been made to me, coupled with a general and entire negation of the existence of the practice in question. The motives which prompted it were more intelligible than the logic. The shadow of reason, which attaches to the statement itself, is borrowed from an earlier state of things, before roads were made, and when, consequently, the landlords could not send the produce of their lands, in a bulky shape, to market. Their connivance at the illicit distillation of spirits by the tenants, receiving compensation in the higher ratio of rent, might be therefore apparently expedient in an economical point of view. This practice, it may be observed, contributed to rivet in the breasts of the Highlanders, that aversion to roads which characterized them almost up to the period of the *Statistical Survey*.

The improved access to markets, and generally and principally the erection of distilleries in the immediate neighbourhood of the land where the grain is raised, have now realized, in a mode far more efficacious, in an economical, and far less pernicious, in a moral point of view, all the benefits imputed to the ancient illegal system. But a mistake more erroneous and more prejudicial than that on which the statement we are considering is founded, could not be well imagined. The share of the profits of illegal distillation, which accrued to the landlord, was in fact more than counterbalanced by the losses which he sustained, from the failures and plunder resulting from the profligate habits induced by it. The benefit of reform to the landlord, as well as to the tenant, may be illustrated by a single instance, which was communicated to me by a leading minister of the Kirk, near Elgin, on the eastern coast of Scotland. A neighbouring parish had been long notorious for illicit distillation, and always equally so for extreme and most degrading poverty. Its inhabitants happily underwent a reformation, abandoned their lawless habits, and were then in possession of the sum of at least £3000.

To the legal provision of spirits by means of regular distilleries must be attributed in a great measure the progressive diminution of crime, and all the concomitant vices and evils of smuggling and illicit distillation. Still the very legal provision may become in itself a bane, by facilitating and encouraging the consumption of spirits. The conscientious landlord must experience a painful struggle between considerations of personal interest and those which regard the moral welfare of his people, when he calculates the success of a distillery, and exercises some little self-denial in employing, as he is in duty bound, all his influence in counteracting the practice of drinking spirits, and substituting a less ardent and pernicious beverage. Notwithstanding the flagrant mischief produced by beer-drinking, as now exemplified in England, (the consequence of the multiplication of beer-shops, at a low rate of license,) there can be no question that it is far preferable to spirit-drinking; and the substitution of beer for whisky in Scotland would prove a most important benefit to that country. Nor could the most rigorous stickler for ancient customs object to it as an innovation, since also, as General Stewart informs us, on the testimony of tradition, formed the universal national beverage of the people till the middle of the last century; French wines and brandy being drunk by the gentry. "Whisky-house," he states, "is a term unknown in the Gaelic. Public-houses are called *Tai Leanne*, that

\* Since the preceding observations were originally written, the alteration in the mode of levying the duty, together with the legal supply, have nearly put an end to the illicit traffic in Scotland. One lady, possessed of immense property, has prohibited the use of spirits altogether on her estates. The success of the experiment is matter of national interest.

in, ale-houses. Had whisky been the favourite beverage of the Highlanders, as many people believe, would not their songs, their tales, and names of houses allotted for convivial meetings, bear some allusion to the propensity, which has no reality in fact, and is one of those numerous instances of the remarkable ignorance of the true character of the Highlanders on the part of their Lowland friends and neighbours?" He might have added, that there was a law of the old Scotch Parliament, "anent" (against) auld wives brewing evil ale."

Dr. Macculloch disputes the fact of ale having been much drunk by the Scotch, as their poverty prevented any but the landed proprietors from brewing. But as under the ancient system, the landlords, whether chief or subordinate, were numerous, and their labourers and other dependants lived much more in their houses, or depended more upon their bounty in compensation for service, they probably received ale or beer as part of it. He also doubts whether the brewing the superfluous barley instead of distilling it would be profitable, as even now the quantity consumed in the shape of spirits is small. But if the profits derived from it in England are so enormous and universal, would they not in some degree correspond in Scotland, provided the practice of spirit-drinking be much discontinued?

#### LEWIS; MORAL AND RELIGIOUS IMPROVEMENT.

THE moral and religious improvement of the natives of Lewis has been retarded by the inadequacy of ministerial superintendence. One pastor only, except a missionary on the western coast, supported by the Royal bounty, is appointed to each of its four extensive parishes, containing a total population of 14,000 persons: and besides this, there are physical impediments which oppose great difficulties to intercourse between the clergy and their parishioners. The deficiency has been partly supplied by catechists and readers, who instruct the people in the forms appointed by the Established Church, in the most neglected districts, by schools, and by the excellent custom adhered to by the people here, as in other parts of Scotland, of meeting together at each other's houses, for the purpose of reading and expounding the Scriptures. To this practice, eminently beneficial, though abused, more direct reference will be hereafter made.

In no part of Scotland have the Gaelic schools proved more salutary than in Lewis, where, except in the town of Stornaway, the Gaelic language is exclusively spoken; yet the inadequacy of the funds of the Society has compelled them to limit the advantage to a period, and thus the schools formerly established in the wild parish of Lochs have been withdrawn. The British and Foreign Bible Society has distributed a considerable number of copies of the Scriptures in Lewis.

A recent Sacrament in the parish of Uig, in Lewis, exhibited a scene of much interest. A considerable number of persons had assembled, as usual, on the occasion; and

the minister, who had been recently appointed, a man of much piety and zeal, received the sudden and unexpected aid of an eminent Gaelic preacher, Mr. Macdonald, minister of the parish of Farintosh in Ross-shire, who had been blown to the island by a contrary wind, whilst shaping his course to St. Kilda on a voluntary mission, for a purpose which has since proved successful, of providing that island with a minister and place of worship. The addresses of Mr. Macdonald produced a sensation which has spread through the island: he was now employed in preaching to the Irish in the Gaelic, which they well understood, in the north of Ireland.

To all the plans for the moral and religious improvement of the people of Lewis, the proprietor and his lady have contributed their zealous assistance, and their temporary residence in the island has consequently proved very beneficial\*.

P. S. Q. R.

\* The late Lord Seaforth, father of Mrs. Stewart Mackenzie, the last male representative of the Seaforth line, "high chief of Kintail," was one of the most accomplished and princely characters of whom Scotland could boast. His acquirements, classical taste and erudition, powers of conversation, urbanity and liberality, rendered him the delight of every society in which he appeared, the pride of his clansmen and the ornament of his country. The infirmity of deafness debarred him to a great degree from that free intercourse with mankind for which the enlargement of his mind and the deep fund of his resources pre-eminently qualified him: and Mr. Fox is reputed to have said of him, that it was in compassion to the rest of mankind that Providence by means of this defect deprived him of that transcendent superiority to which he would otherwise have attained. The principal residence of Lord Seaforth was Brahan Castle in the eastern part of Ross-shire: here he acted the part and supported the hospitality of a chieftain. His visits to Lewis were unfrequent, but the authority which he exercised was almost feudal: he raised in person the 78th regiment among the natives of this island, and, in some instances, forced into the service able-bodied young men, who were reluctant to obey the call of their chief, which spread generally, like the beacon of former days, kindling the same flame of enthusiasm wherever it blazed along. The following amusing anecdote is related of the late Lord Seaforth. The women in Lewis are compelled to submit to much drudgery, from which they are elsewhere exempted. It was formerly, I know not whether it is still, the practice in this island for the men to ride the women across the fords. Lord Seaforth arrived at a stream on horseback, while a peasant so mounted was very contentedly crossing. He rode up to the man just as his fair pad had reached mid-channel, and then laid his whip about his back and shoulders till he dismounted, clad as he was, into the water.

Of the toil to which the women are subjected in this island, Dr. Macculloch says: "Droves of these animals were collected in the neighbourhood, trudging into the town from the moors, with loads of peat on their backs. The men dig the peat, and the women supply the place of horses, being regularly trained to it. I was also informed that they did actually draw the harrows, but this I did not witness." Yet it must be said in behalf of the natives of Lewis, that in defect of gallantry the civilized inhabitants of opulent and highly-cultivated Belgium are not a whit behind them. I have seen a woman dragging a boat along a canal in that country containing two stout fellows contentedly smoking their pipes, whilst crowds of passengers swept by without noticing the circumstance, as in any degree strange.

The sons of the late Lord Seaforth, men of high promise and accomplishments, died before their father; thus fulfilling a part of the mournful prophecy which is current in Scotland respecting this family



CORMORANTS.